

Matschie's Tree Kangaroo

Scientific Name: *Dendrolagus matschiei*

Class: Mammalia

Order: Diprotodontia

Family: Macropodinae



The Matschie's Tree Kangaroo is a marsupial adapted for arboreal locomotion. They have stocky bodies with their forelimbs and hindlimbs closer in proportion than other kangaroos. The body has a length of 55 to 63 cm (21.65 to 24.8 inches) with a cylindrical tail again as long as the body. They have thick chestnut to red brown fur that grows in opposite direction on their nape and back. The tail is bright yellow along with the belly, ear edges and feet. They often have a dark stripe down their back and a vortex of fur in the middle of the back. Their feet have cushion-like pads covered with roughened skin and some of their nails are curved. The Matschie's Tree Kangaroo typically weighs 6 to 13 kg (13.2 to 28.6 lbs).

Range

The Matschie's Tree Kangaroo is found exclusively in the Houn Peninsula of Papua New Guinea and the nearby island of Umboi.

Habitat

Matschie's Tree Kangaroo live in lower montane forests that occur between 1000 and 3000 meters. They prefer Oaks at the lower level while conifers are common at the higher elevations.

Gestation

The gestation length is between 39 to 45 days.

Litter

The average number of offspring is 1 per year.

Behavior

The Matschie's tree kangaroo is agile in trees and can travel rapidly from tree to tree leaping as much as 9 meters down to an adjoining tree. When climbing, they spring 2-3 feet, wrap their arms around the tree, place their feet pointing up against the tree and scale the trunk with arms sliding and feet hopping. They always back down trees and frequently descend to the ground by leaping. They move on the ground with a hobbling gait about as fast as a human walking. The kangaroos sleep about 60% of the time curling up in whatever tree they happen to be in. They are solitary (except during breeding) and tend to ignore one another even when sharing the same tree.

Reproduction

The female Matschie's Tree Kangaroo will reach sexual maturity at 2 years and stay sexually active for 10 to 12 years. During mating, the female descends to the ground and approaches the male. This is followed by tongue-clicking, hissing, and swatting of the male until breeding occurs. There is no set breeding period during the year, more determined by the age of the previous joey. Around 300 days the joey ventures out of the pouch and has permanently vacated the pouch.

Wild Diet

The main diet in the wild consists of mature leaves from the trees and also wild fruits, flowers, nuts, insects, bark, sap, and bird eggs. They need leaves that are high in tannin to maintain their rich color of the coats.